

The Odyssey of Nicholas Russel

Ronald Hayashida and David Kittelson

The Senate President of Hawaii's first Territorial Legislature was Nicholas Russel, a peripatetic Russian revolutionary who founded socialist movements throughout Europe and, after his Island sojourn, continued his tireless activities in Japan, the Philippines, and China. He mastered eight European languages and spoke Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese, and several Philippine dialects. "He was an internationalist," declared I. I. Popov, "not in words, but in deeds, in the broadest meaning of this word—a man of humanity."¹

Russel was born as Nikolai Konstantinovich Sudzilovskii on December 3, 1850 in Mogilev, Byelorussia. After entering Petersburg University in 1868 as a law student, he transferred to the medical school at Kiev University. During his student years Sudzilovskii embarked on what was to become a lifetime career as a political activist.² In 1874 he fled Russia, sought by the czarist police for violation of Article 193 of Russia's Criminal Code—a prohibition against revolutionary propaganda and agitation. Sudzilovskii was described on a "most wanted" list as:

Former student of Kiev University, son of a retired official of the provincial city Mogilev. Age—25, height—a little lower than average; hair—light brown; face—clear; nose, rather large; small, sparse beard; slovenly dressed; his suit resembles a factory-hand's outfit.³

He went to London where he interned for a while at St. George's Hospital and once shared a speaker's platform at a rally with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.⁴ Sudzilovskii later turned up in Geneva where he married his first wife by whom he had two daughters. In 1875 he arrived

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in Bucharest, registered in Bucharest University's medical school, and adopted his English nom de guerre—Nicholas Russel. He received his Doctor of Medicine degree in 1876.⁵

The Russo-Turkish war broke out in 1877 and when Russian troops passed through Rumania to engage Turkish forces in Bulgaria, Russel dispensed medical assistance as well as socialist propaganda. He also established connections among sympathetic Russian doctors who later provided channels for his revolutionary literature into Russia.⁶ After the war Russel edited and published a socialist newspaper, but eventually pressure from Russia caused Rumanian authorities to expell him. Then Russel divorced his wife and parted with his children in order to free himself for a full-time revolutionary career—but first working for several years as a bacteriologist, chemist, oculist, and pharmacologist in Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland in order to earn enough money for his family's support.⁷ Russel moved to Paris where he continued with his political activities until 1882 when he left for Bulgaria. Later, in Greece, he remarried and sailed for San Francisco in 1887.

Here Russel became an American citizen, set up practice as an oculist, and gained considerable status among the city's Slavic population. He was generous in "Affording shelter to homeless countrymen and for making constant contributions of money, in various sums, to the people of his race".⁸ He also continued writing about the need for reform in Russia and smuggled this literature in through his European friends.

Observing American society first hand shattered his illusions about democracy and equality in the new world. "All our democracy is superfluous, about a millimeter deep," he wrote, "America is a purely Anglo-Saxon mixture of unsatiated greed, brutal cruelty, and hypocritical bigotry."⁹ These misgivings led him in 1889 to petition the Russian government unsuccessfully for permission to return.¹⁰

Russel became embroiled in an acrimonious controversy with the head of the North American Greco-Russian Orthodox Church, Vladimir, Bishop of Aliaskinskii and Aleutskii, who had been extorting parishioners and embezzling church funds. Led by Russel, the Slavic community in San Francisco petitioned the Holy Synod in St. Petersburg demanding Vladimir's recall. The Bishop thereupon accused Russel of defying the Church, committing crimes against the Russian state, and of being a bigamist. The Bishop then publically excommunicated him in 1890. Russel's supporters continued to press embezzlement charges and had the Bishop arrested. Russel himself filed a civil libel action against the Bishop, claiming "Material damages to his medical practice had been caused by his public excommunication." The Church eventually recalled Vladimir and declared Russel's excommunication inactive.

However, the Russian government was reluctant to see a fugitive from its laws become the hero of San Francisco's Slavic community and dispatched a new consul with instructions to discredit Russel. The continuing controversy exhausted Russel and he and his wife sailed for Hawaii in 1892.¹¹

Russel served as the Waianae Plantation physician until 1895. His activities and impressions of Hawaii during this period are recounted in two serialized articles, "In a village by the ocean," and "Among the Hawaiian volcanoes," which he wrote for his Russian audience in 1893 and 1895.¹² His scientific observations about Hawaii's flora, fauna, and geology in these articles provided Russian natural scientists and geologists with the basis for their scientific knowledge about Hawaii. Sections of both articles continued to be used by Russian natural scientists well into the twentieth century. As late as 1948, his "Ascent to Kilauea" was included in a Soviet textbook on physical geography.¹³

"In a village by the ocean" analyzed the peoples and cultures of the Islands during the last year of the Monarchy. In describing plantation labor, he observed that Hawaii's contract labor system was not slave labor, but actually provided many benefits for the immigrant workers.¹⁴

Russel was concerned about the erosion of the culture and power of the indigenous Hawaiians in the face of growing American domination. He idealized the Hawaiians:

The Kanaka is a person. The American is a calculating machine. The Kanaka is more well-rounded in spirit and in body and with all the fibers of his healthy organism. The American concentrates his exclusive efforts on the pursuit of material prosperity. He lives not for himself but for his own furnishings. The Kanaka is dying out; the American is taking his place. What is better: to pass away as a Kanaka or to live as an American?¹⁵

And he blamed the American missionaries, "With their fanaticism, their narrowness of views, and their misunderstandings of the local social and political institutions," for the decline of the Hawaiian population. Russel encouraged the use of Hawaiian in the schools and, because of his generous medical assistance to the Hawaiians in the Waianae area, became popularly known as *Kauka Lukini* (Russian doctor).¹⁶

Russel felt that the 1893 Revolution was disastrous for the Hawaiian and opposed annexation because, "The rapacious state with white capitalists at its head would to the utmost and unnecessarily restrain the independent Kanaka, would subject him to the iron law of the economic minimum, and would make him adapt to a very intensive economy."¹⁷ Instead he favored an independent Republic with a strong central government, "The social, national, economic, and religious diversity

and mixture, make necessary the firm authority of government; and this independence from foreign interference cannot be achieved without a prolonged and painful process of civil dissension."¹⁸

Discouraged by the Islands' political and economic situation, Russel decided to return to Europe and full-time revolutionary activity again. But after having left Waianae Plantation, he changed his mind at the last moment. The November 7, 1895 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* noted, "The Russian physician who was reported last evening as intending to leave by the next steamer has recently rented a house in Honolulu for five months."

Russel leased premises for himself and his wife near Punchbowl at the corner of Spencer and Magazine Streets and began publishing his professional card, "Dr. Russel, Office Masonic Building, Hours 9-11 3-5."¹⁹ He also joined the Medical Association of Hawaii and on May 27, 1896 at the Association's annual meeting, read a paper, "Our health policy," which was subsequently published in Honolulu. A month later Russel issued another pamphlet, "How to live in the Hawaiian Islands," which was a tourist guide to Hawaii. It stressed his conviction that Hawaii "Seems destined by nature for a heterogenous population . . . to prove that a harmonious and peaceful community of human beings composed of various races and colors, is not a mere dream for a progressive people."²⁰

However, Russel himself felt uncomfortable living in Honolulu's atmosphere of *haole* domination and Hawaiian poverty. He remembered an earlier visit to the Big Island about which he enthused:

I do not like cities; but it is impossible not to fall in love with Hilo. This is not a city and not the countryside but a very big greenhouse. Honolulu is undoubtedly a beautiful and unique town; but as the capital as well as a political and commercial city, it is too foreign, alien, cluttered, and strange. He who wants to see a genuine Hawaiian town with all its genre peculiarities, should better go to Hilo.²¹ Of the two Hawaiian cities Hilo is healthier than Honolulu, although Honolulu could be rendered quite as healthy, if not healthier, if the government lands upon the neighboring mountain slopes were surveyed, divided into lots and offered for free exchange.²²

In 1897 Russel auctioned off the unexpired lease on his Punchbowl home and moved to Hilo. The March 20, 1897 *Hilo Tribune* reported, "Dr. N. Russel, of Honolulu, author and physician, is visiting in Hilo." Five days later the *Hawaii Herald* announced that he was "About to build a residence in Olaa." And on March 27, 1897, the *Hilo Tribune* noted that Russel had "Received 100 acres just back of Mr. Fulcher's tract on the Volcano Road . . . let contracts for clearing and planting seventy five acres of it in coffee . . . purchased a place with twenty-six acres in coffee near Mountain View with frontage on the main road. A scheme of the Doctor's is to bring a number of Russian families and

locate them on his Olaa plantation." Towards this end, Russel sent glowing letters to Russian acquaintances to attract emigrants, By 1898 the following Russians were engaged in coffee cultivation in Olaa:

V. Elitcheff, 141 acres	N. Russel, 200 acres
C. Slavin, 106 acres	N. Lebedeff, 100 acres
N. Fedoroff, 51 acres	A. Penkovsky, 100 acres
A. Potemkin, 100 acres	N. Muratoff, 100 acres
A. Kraus, 100 acres	E. Yaretsky, 100 acres ²³
M. Komorsky, 100 acres	

Russel steadfastly developed his plantation. A home was constructed, stables erected, water tanks put in, roads levelled, and 45 acres of coffee were under cultivation. Impressed with this febrile activity, the August 21, 1897 *Hilo Tribune* concluded, "All of which goes to show that Dr. Russel is a hustler." Earlier, on July 24, 1897, the *Hilo Tribune* also announced that he had begun "To practice medicine as an oculist in the Spreckles building in Hilo," involving a daily 17 mile round trip between his office and home. Russel still found time to write a scientific article, "Light as a remedy," for the September 9, 1897 *Hawaii Herald* and a short ecological description of Olaa for the *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual*.²⁴

Russel's idyllic retreat from political affairs was shattered in 1898 by the Republic's imposition of a valuation tax on coffee. He opposed this tax and acted as attorney for a group of Olaa coffee growers who sought its repeal before the Hilo Tax Appeals Board in August 1898.²⁵ Disturbed by the political impotence of these unorganized planters, Russel called a meeting at his home in order to approve a constitution and by-laws of the Olaa Coffee Planters Association. The purpose of the Association, according to the September 17, 1898 *Hilo Tribune*, "Is to be on the watch for the common interests for the coffee planters of this district, as well as to cultivate friendly social intercourse." This meeting, moreover, affirmed the Association's opposition to the valuation tax and elected the following officers: Nicholas Russel, President; F. Souza, Vice-President; Mr. Supe, Secretary; and O. E. Eager, Treasurer. As head of the Association, Russel was appointed to the Board of Commissioners of Agriculture for the Hilo District.²⁶ His efforts on behalf of the planters consumed so much of his time that Russel was forced to transfer his medical practice from Hilo to his home. Thereafter his professional card in the Hilo newspapers read, "Dr. N. Russel, Specialist in eye diseases; seventeenth mile, Olaa, Hawaii."²⁷

In 1898 the United States annexed Hawaii, providing Russel with the fillip to become further involved in Territorial politics. Hawaii's transi-

tion from a Republic to an American Territory involved electing a Territorial Legislature on November 6, 1900. The major contending political parties were the Republicans and the Democrats, with the former considerably stronger than the latter. Republican leaders assumed that the native Hawaiians, who comprised the bulk of the electorate, would split their votes, thereby assuring *haole*-backed Republican dominance.²⁸ However, the Hawaiians still resented the 1893 Revolution and *haole* political and economic domination. Consequently, in June 1900 Joseph Clark, John Kalaukoa, David Kalauokalani, James Kaulia, William Mossman, J. W. Pipikane, John Prendergast, and Robert Wilcox organized the Independent Home Rule Party to appeal to the native Hawaiians. Wilcox was selected to contend against the Republican's Samuel Parker and the Democrat's Prince David Kawanana-koa for the Islands' highest elective office—Delegate to the United States Congress.

Home Rule leaders capitalized on the anti-*haole* resentment among the Hawaiians and during the campaign issued a number of decidedly racial statements.²⁹ To dispell this counter-productive image, however, Wilcox encouraged the nomination of *haoles* who were sympathetic to the Hawaiians' cause. "Mr. Wilcox," the *Independent* announced on September 17, 1900, "says that there is no color line in his party and that 'haoles' will be nominated in which he and the so-called haoles have faith and confidence." The Home Rulers had strong neighbor island support and were given an even chance to defeat the Republicans.

Before Annexation Russel had favored an independent Republic with a strong central government. Afterwards he advocated political decentralization, enabling each Island to govern itself independently of American authorities centralized in Honolulu. In spite of his relentless support of the Hawaiians and early avowal of the Big Island's Home Rule party, Russel was not nominated for any office at the party's convention in Kona in September 1900. However, Wilcox intervended on Russel's behalf. The September 19, 1900 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* reported, "The leader of the Independent Home Rule party may place Dr. N. Russel on the Independent Senatorial ticket for Hawaii in place of one of the present nominees. It is almost an assured fact that Dr. N. Russel will be a Senator."

The first Territorial election was a huge success for the Home Rulers. Wilcox was elected Delegate and the party gained seven of the 15 Senate seats—the Republicans won seven, and the Democrats, one. In the House races, the Home Rule party gained a plurality, but importantly not a majority, of the seats. Three of the four Senate seats in the First Electoral District on the Big Island went to Home Rulers: John Brown,

988 votes; J. B. Kaohi, 887 votes; and Russel, 873 votes. Republican John Paris captured the remaining seat with 809 votes.³⁰

In a December 5, 1900 letter to fellow revolutionary Egor Lazarev, Russell boasted of:

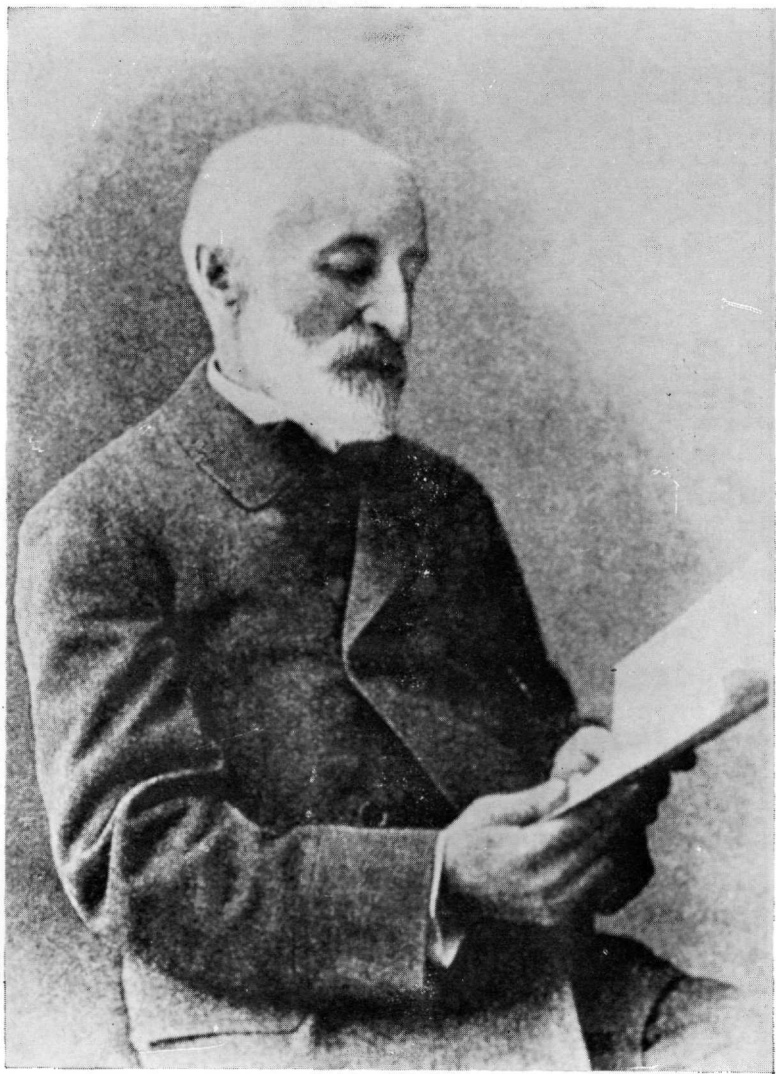
The end of eight years of the missionary-sugar planter oligarchy. In order to arouse the natives, we responded with incendiary speeches against the existing government of sugar planters, missionaries, and other white enemies of the Hawaiian Islands. The results of the campaign exceeded our expectations . . . we clobbered the Republicans and the Democrats. I was listed on the electoral ballot at Kauka Lukini. We are confronted with the prospect of committing a genuine revolution in all Hawaiian legislation from top to bottom. Since I am almost the sole white person in both chambers who knows anything about the techniques of the legislative machinery in civilized countries, therefore probably the main part of the burden for the compilation of draft laws, and for the same reason, of literary and scientific documents, will lie with me.³¹

Russel was also jubilant about the prospects for Hawaii's future, "Our country is little—in all 150,000 inhabitants—but exceptionally rich and important as a strategic and commercial point." He felt the Islands had a special responsibility to cultivate a relationship with the United States which would be the model for Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines.³²

Before the Legislature convened, Russel proposed holding mass meetings in each election district to elect a non-partisan committee which would advise and assist the new representatives in formulating needed legislation. In the January 12, 1901 *Hilo Tribune*, he said that such committees would make the Senators and Representatives "Clearly aware of what the people really want and expect from us" and obligate the legislators "To follow strictly the will of the people who have elected us."

The First Territorial Legislature opened on February 20, 1901, and lasted well into the middle of the year, followed by a short special session in 1902. After the Senate convened, Russel was nominated temporary chairman by Home Ruler William White of Maui. After the following day's balloting, Russel was elected Senate President, receiving eight votes. Maui Senator Samuel Kaiue, who received the remaining six votes, became Vice-President.

Russel came to feel that his office offered no special prerogatives and actually obstructed his involvement in political matters. He was generally limited to deciding questions of parliamentary procedure, could not participate in debates, and could not vote unless a deadlock developed. He occupied himself with drafting numerous bills dealing with governmental control over alcoholic beverages, land and produce distribution, capital and trade taxes, public health, agricultural law reforms, business reforms, public education, and school libraries. He also championed the



Portrait of Russel in Egor Lazarev's "Gavaiskii Senator", *Byloe* (June 1907), p. 192. The gentleman's clothing probably dates the photograph from the period of his relative economic success in San Francisco or the Hawaiian Islands.



Political cartoon on page 1 of the March 1, 1901 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* commenting on Russel's disregard for parliamentary procedures while serving as Senate President.

establishment of a land grant college in his home district near Mountain View.³³ The February 27 and March 8, 1901 issues of the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* caricatured him during this period as a bearded, white-haired "Papa Russel", aloof from all Senate squabbles.

However, the restrictions of the Senate Presidency not only continued to frustrate Russel personally, but they also enabled Big Island Republicans to discredit him in the eyes of his constituency. "The only news we have heard of the one haole senator elected from this district," editorialized the February 22, 1901 *Hilo Tribune*, "is to the effect that he is the father of a dispensatory liquor bill for the purpose of putting all the 'devilish traffic' in spirits or liquor under government control and sale directly. Russel has entirely exceeded his duties as a chosen servant of the people in proposing the legislation in question. Dr. Russel's native Hawaiian colleagues certainly will furnish enough of the strange and impracticable without his adding to the museum of curio by introduction of bills which no one wants and which would be of no advantage if they were wanted."

On the other hand, when Russel attempted to assert his leadership, he was accused of acting like the "Chief of the Third Department in St. Petersburg," behaving "in a very Czaracaweskiki manner," and remembering "his former prejudice to Russian methods."³⁴ The March 8, 1901 *Hilo Tribune* recommended that he memorize Cushing's Manual for a "thorough acquaintance with parliamentary practice."

In order to defend his bills on the Senate floor and to work more closely with party colleagues, Russel attempted to resign from the Senate Presidency on March 27:

Having repeatedly called the attention of this body to the fact that the short time accorded the Legislature is wasted in debate on trivial matters which are of no interest to the people of this Territory while the passage of measures which were promised by all the political parties are delayed; that little or no work is being done by the several committees as evidenced by failure to promptly report; that as a whole, the senate, is practically, an inefficient body and that the short time remaining in which to perform the responsible duties, with which we are entrusted will prove utterly fruitless if present methods are continued.

I protest against such an order of things, and I appeal to the best elements of all parties and of all the people, to unite for the purpose of doing our plain duty to the people during the remaining half of the session. There is no time to waste.

Being unable to assume the heavy share of responsibility connected with my office under circumstance and convinced that I can no longer fully perform my duty upon the floor of the Senate, I therefore beg to tender my resignation as President.³⁵

Russel was especially disturbed by the exceptional time and energy devoted by both Houses considering House Bill 15, removing a special tax on female dogs—and for which the 1901 Session became known as "The Lady Dog Legislature."

The Senate was reluctant to accept his resignation. Russel's attempt to persuade his colleagues was mimicked in the March 28, 1901 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* :

I am here on ze dis floor to expedite matters. Nodding can bring me back in ze shair. You can put my letter on ze table, you can under table or over table him, but here I stand myself on ze floor.

After the Senate tabled the resignation, Russel agreed to retain the chair for another day. This prompted a cartoon in the March 30, 1901 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* with the caption, "President N. Russelnitsky came off the perch for a few hours." Thereafter he refused to resume the duties of Senate President and on April 2 Vice-President Kaiue assumed the leadership and Honolulu's David Kalauokalani became Vice-President.

Russel assumed Kaiue's committee positions and immediately began promoting his bills calling for liquor control, construction of a new Olaa Road, universal women's suffrage, and Puerto Rican immigration.

Russel's political influence seemed to be at its zenith. There were even indications that Russel would assume party leadership whenever Wilcox was on the Mainland. "If Robert Wilcox," the *Independent* warned, "delegates his political pull in this Territory to Dr. Russel, he might as well give an order for the digging of his political grave." However, Russel's power in the Senate and political influence in the Home Rule Party were not firmly established. He came under increasing attack not only from Republicans, but also from Hawaiians who opposed his liquor control bill. It became increasingly clear to Russel that the fate of his entire legislative program rested on the success of his liquor bill. The pro-Hawaiian *Independent* lambasted him in an April 9, 1901 editorial, "We have the highest respect for Dr. Nicholas Russel, now Senator Russel, (he will forgive us for using the name under which he is masquerading), the highest esteem in his capacity as a physician, but as a politician and a citizen (of some country) dealing with a great social question we think that he is over-reaching himself, and in ordinary parlance, getting off his base."

On April 17, Russel's liquor control bill was defeated in the Senate by a solid phalanx of Republican votes. The *Independent* of that date blamed the legislation's demise on the "error on the part of the father of the bill, Senator Russell," and on the fact that

The bill was absurd from beginning to end. Dr. Russel as a "reformer" and a political boss has not been a success. His pet bill is killed and we suggest to the cosmopolitan gentleman that he leave the Senate and retire to the wilderness of his Puna coffee ranch, where he can "dispense" liquor *ad libitum* or dispense with it.

During the remainder of the session Russel's bills, as well as those of other Home Rulers, encountered stiff Republican opposition in the committees, on the Senate floor, and in the House. The few such party bills that were passed by the Legislature generally were vetoed by Republican Governor Sanford Dole. This failure stemmed from the fact that the Home Rulers, unlike the Republicans, found it difficult to work with others and to agree on a common program. The defeat of Russel's liquor bill also revealed that the Home Rule Party did not have the indiscriminating support of all Hawaiians.

Reacting to their legislative failures, the Home Rulers focused their anger on Dole, whom, they believed, had orchestrated the political opposition to their programs. They introduced a resolution asking President William McKinley to remove Dole. Russel disassociated himself from this action, explaining:

It was always my opinion that this country, in political, economical, and social aspects, was, and is, in an abnormal and unhealthy condition. It was always my opinion that only through a series of important reforms the powerful obstacles toward its development, prosperity, and assimilation with the United States may be removed. I have accepted the seat in the Senate in order to give my assistance to such reforms, and have brought them up before you in the shape of a few bills, which, in my estimation could and would remedy the most crying evils. You have voted them all down. In doing so you have shown that you do not approve of any reforms. The present resolution as well as your refusal to confirm several of the government officials throws some light on your ideas. You think that the unsatisfactory condition of this country is due only to the defective personnel of the administration, and that by changing it you will attain your ends. I think that such an idea is preposterous. So long as political, economical, and social conditions are ruling, no change of personnel will help. Nothing will be changed by putting Peter in place of John. Therefore I will refrain from voting on this or any similar resolution. This does not mean that I approve the present personnel, but because I think no personnel will be able to change a rotten system.³⁶

Later, in an interview with a newspaper reporter, he explained that in a parliamentary system:

Lack of confidence in the Executive on the part of the Legislature is the signal for the retirement of the former from office, but in the United States this rule does not prevail and this is responsible for a very unsatisfactory state of affairs here. In Hawaii, the Executive has no confidence in the Legislature and the Legislature no confidence in the Executive, and one or the other of them ought to go. I don't care which, for I am disgusted with both. I doubt however whether even a new election would improve the personnel or ability of the Legislature to any considerable extent.³⁷

In May 10, 1901 *Hilo Tribune* noted,

Senator Russell has experienced a change of heart during the past few weeks that must be painful to his constituents and startling even to himself. He was elected for the most part on the strength of his professed and bitter opposition to the Hawaiian Executive in all its branches. No Irishman was ever more 'agin' the Government than the ex-citizen of Russia.

Thereafter Russel eschewed all further involvement in the struggle between the legislative and executive branches. His disappointment with Hawaiian politics and an unexpected meeting with an old friend—Leo Deutsch—again strengthened his resolve to resume a full time revolutionary career. Shortly before the Legislature closed, Deutsch arrived from Nagasaki for a twenty-four hour stopover. He recounted his tearful reunion with the “greyhaired gentleman in a white coat.

“Deutsch, is it you?” shouted Russel. “How did you get here?” he cried as he embraced me. I told him in a few words the story of my escape, and that I was on my way to Europe. “And you’re going on this very day? No, we can’t allow that! You must stay with me. We’ll stay here for a day or two, and then you must come back to the farm with me!”³⁸

Russel persuaded Deutsch to stay for a while and after the session ended, they went to Olaa. Deutsch wrote:

I then went back with my friend to the island of Hawaii where his wife awaited us, and there spent a month; during which time I learned from the Russels and their friends, and also from books, a great deal about both the present and past history of these wonderful islands. The lives of the natives exhibit much that is curious, and also much that is tragic. I will only mention the fact that the Hawaiians are dying out with almost inconceivable rapidity.

My stay with the Russels gave me much pleasure; we made expeditions to various parts of the islands, to see the volcano Kilauea, the sugar plantations, the native villages, and so on; and we were never tired of congratulating ourselves on the turn of fortune that had brought us together on this island of the Pacific. At last, towards the end of July, after a delightful visit, I set out on my travels once more.³⁹

Thereafter Russel became increasingly disenchanted with Hawaii. He declined to run in the 1902 elections. His coffee crop proved uneconomical and even agricultural diversification in the form of lemons and other fruit failed to remedy the situation.⁴⁰ Russel wrote:

Hilo is on its way down, since the decline in coffee prices. The real cause of Hilo’s downfall is that it represents but a community of middlemen who do not produce or in any way contribute to produce anything. Hilo cannot boast of a single factory smokestack.⁴¹

Russel sought ways to resume his revolutionary activity on the borderlands of Russia. In October 1903 he sailed for China, remaining there for nine months until after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war in January 1904. Russel’s prolonged absence placed a heavy financial burden on his wife who remained in Hawaii. She advertised the sale of a “Weber piano” in the December 11, 1903 *Hilo Tribune*. Six months later Russel was back in Olaa where he remained until May 1905. Drawing on his Chinese experiences, Russel lectured on “China, the riddle” in November 1904 at the home of Levi Lyman, principal of the

Hilo Boarding School, and concluded that unlike the Hawaiians who were at the "theological" stage of historical development, the Chinese were at the higher "metaphysical" level. China, nonetheless, remained in his eyes the epitome of stagnation, conservatism, and oriental fatalism.⁴²

Several events in the Far East and Russia occupied Russel's energies. In December 1904, Port Arthur, the Russian bastion in China, fell to the Japanese, and in January 1905, the "Bloody Sunday" slaughter in St. Petersburg heralded the Russian revolution. He wrote four lengthy serialized articles in the *Hilo Tribune* to explain these developments.⁴³

In the spring of 1905 journalist George Kennan arrived in Tokyo as a war correspondent. After observing several hundred Russian prisoners-of-war, he realized that this captive audience provided an excellent opportunity for propagandizing against the Russian government and began looking for sources of anti-czarist literature. The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom received Kennan's request and, in turn, asked Russel to represent the Society in Japan. He agreed, "Not only willingly; but with patriotic enthusiasm." Again leaving his wife behind, Russel left for Japan in June 1905. Kennan recalled his first meeting with Russel:

A well-dressed, courteous gentlemen of prepossessing appearance, whose speech seemed to indicate that he was an American. I saw at a glance that he was a man of character, cultivation and cosmopolitan experience; but I could not quite understand why an American physician of his age and evident ability should be willing to leave his home and cross the Pacific for the purpose of trying what, after all, was only an experiment. To this query, Russel responded. "But I am a Russian," and explained the circumstances of his exile.⁴⁴

The energetic, white-haired Russel was highly successful in gaining the cooperation of Japanese authorities as well as in conducting mass propaganda meetings among the prisoners. The July 11, 1905 *Hilo Tribune* noted, "Dr. N. Russel is reported to be laboring among the Russian prisoners in Japan preaching liberal government for Russia." By the end of the war, Kennan estimated, "Of the seventy thousand prisoners in Japan, at least fifty thousand went back to Russia with new ideas of government and a clearer understanding of the causes of the war. All of them had become liberals and three-fourths of them revolutionists."

The Russian government, through its ambassador in Washington, protested against Russel's extensive and successful propaganda activities and persuaded the American government to restrict his work. Russel then briefly returned to Hawaii where his passport and citizenship were revoked. Discouraged by this action, Russel wrote to revolutionary

writer Maxim Gorkii of his complete disillusionment with American democracy.⁴⁵ Russell accused Washington of having persecuted me systematically for my refusal to obey its order during the Russo-Japanese War and cease propaganda among the Russian prisoners, contrary to all laws and rational sense, has deprived me of my American citizenship. It used my prolonged absence as an excuse.⁴⁶

The September 6, 1906 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* reported,

Dr. Nicholas Russel sailed for the Orient on the *Hong Kong Maru* to resume his propaganda of free institutions for Russia among his countrymen in Manchuria. Mrs. Russel remains in Hawaii for the present, but the doctor may decide to close up all his affairs here and leave the islands for good.

Mrs. Russel never went to the Orient and their relationship ended.

With the Russo-Japanese War at an end, Russel settled in Nagasaki where he developed a medical practice, caring primarily for the city's destitute. He also married a Japanese woman.⁴⁷ In 1906 he established a publishing house to provide literature for Russian political exiles in Japan and Siberia. Revolutionary Chinese emigres, including Sun Yat-Sen, also sought Russel's advice. Sun visited Nagasaki and, at a meeting arranged by the Japanese Black Dragon Society, conversed for two hours with Russel. They discussed the revolutionary movements generally and went into some detail about assassination techniques since Russel, a trained chemist, was a specialist in manufacturing explosives.⁴⁸

In 1907 Russel settled in the Philippines where he began practicing medicine in extremely primitive conditions on Mindanao, Mindoro, and Negros.⁴⁹ In 1914 after reading an erroneous account of his death in a Russian newspaper, Russel wrote, thanking its staff "For the complimentary necrology, published somewhat prematurely, since I hope to live many more years, perhaps even a hundred years."⁵⁰

Finally, in 1921, Russel sailed to China.

He often regretted that his travels had kept him from actively participating in the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. He wrote,

My position reminds me of Jules Verne—the position of a member of a scientific expedition, a mathematician, who being deeply immersed in calculations was left behind from the party on the end of a promontory surrounded by swamps. Around him the crocodiles are waiting for the time he ends in order to swallow him and his calculations.

Russel wholeheartedly supported the new Soviet government and, because of his credentials as a first generation revolutionary, received a pension from the Russian Society of Political Prisoners and Exiled Emigrants. On April 30, 1930, at the age of seventy nine, he died of influenza in Tientsin.⁵¹

NOTES

- ¹ I. Popov, "Nikolai Konstantinovich Russel-Sudzilovskii", *Katonga I Ssylka*, 6 (1930), p. 168. Hereafter cited as Popov.
- ² A. Shilov and M. Karnaukhova, *Deiateli Revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Rossi bio-bibliograficheskii Slovar*, (Moscow, 1931), pp. 1646-1649. Hereafter cited as Shilov.
- ³ Popov, p. 172.
- ⁴ E. Volkov, *Khristo Botev*, (Moscow, 1923), p. 201.
- ⁵ Popov, p. 172.
- ⁶ V. Gritskevich, *Puteshestviia nashikh zemliakov* (Minsk, 1968), pp. 144-146.
- ⁷ Popov, p. 173.
- ⁸ *Hilo Tribune*, Dec. 19, 1905. Hereafter cited as HT.
- ⁹ "V okeanskoi derevne", *Knizhki Nedeli 11* (Nov. 1893), p. 86. Hereafter cited as "Okeanskoi".
- Gritskevich, p. 151.
- ¹⁰ Shilov, p. 1648.
- ¹¹ Egor Lazarev, "Gavaiskii Senator", *Byloe* (June 1907), pp. 170-178. Hereafter cited as Lazarev.
- ¹² "Okeanskoi", pp. 43-101.
- ¹³ E. Chefranov, *Khrestomatiia do fizicheskoi geografii*, (Moscow, 1948), pp. 158-159.
- ¹⁴ "Okeanskoi", pp. 126-127.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-95.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 122.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 141.
- ¹⁸ "Sredi Gavaiskikh vulkanov", *Knizhki Nedeli 7* (July 1895), p. 91. Hereafter cited as "Sredi".
- ¹⁹ PCA, Jan. 19, 1897.
- ²⁰ Nicholas Russel, *How to live in the Hawaiian Islands*, (Honolulu, 1896), pp. 16-17.
- ²¹ "Sredi", pp. 86-87.
- ²² Russel, *How to live in the Hawaiian Islands*, p. 18.
- ²³ Olaa Coffee Planters Association, "Table of Olaa coffee planters", HAA (1899), p. 179.
- ²⁴ Russel, "Olaa", HAA (1899), pp. 121-126.
- ²⁵ HT, Aug. 20, 1898.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, Dec. 31, 1898.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, April 29, 1899.
- ²⁸ *Independent*, June 7, 1900.
- ²⁹ Roberta Nose, "Robert W. Wilcox, Hawaii's first delegate to Congress", *Hawaii Historical Review* 2 (Jan. 1967), p. 349.
- ³⁰ PCA, Nov. 12, 1900.
- ³¹ Lazarev, pp. 181-186.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ David Kittelson, "University first destined for Mountain View", *Hawaii Tribune Herald*, June 18, 1967.
- ³⁴ *Independent*, Feb. 27 1901; March 8, 1901.
- ³⁵ *Journal of the Senate*, (Honolulu, 1901), p. 238.
- ³⁶ HT, May 10, 1901.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, July 19, 1901.

- ³⁸ Leo Deutsch, *Sixteen years in Siberia* (London, 1903), p. 354.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 354-356.
- ⁴⁰ HT, April 10, 1903.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Feb. 21, 1905.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, Nov. 22, 1904.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, April 18, 1905; April 25, 1905; May 2, 1905; May 9, 1905.
- ⁴⁴ George Kennan, "How Russian soldiers were enlightened in Japan", *Outlook* 109 (Jan. 1915), pp. 622-626.
- ⁴⁵ M. Mel'nikov, "Dobryi Russkii Doktor", *Ogonek* 7 (Feb. 1960), p. 23.
- ⁴⁶ Popov, p. 174.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 176.
- ⁴⁸ Marius Jansen, *The Japanese and Sun Yat-Sen* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), p. 124.
- ⁴⁹ G. Bakalov, *Letopisi Marksizma* (Moscow, 1926), Vol. 2, pp. 50, 53.
- ⁵⁰ Popov, p. 169.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 176.